Hamilton Region Conservation Authority

92-05785/

CURRENTS OF CHANGE

Our Watershed in the 90's

Long and Short Term Strategies Adopted by the Full Authority at its Meeting held on , 1991

Ancaster, October 29, 1991

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fifty years ago, the architects of the Conservation Authorities movement in Ontario insisted that our success lay in the involvement of the "grass roots" - the watershed residents - in the management of our renewable natural resources. Today, we are urged to "think globally and act locally", to help our planet survive. The message is essentially the same, although it is now even more immediate.

As the largest environmental, natural resources, organization in this area it is incumbent on the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority to become a leader in promoting and encouraging our watershed residents to become responsible partners in the management of this area's natural resources.

The Conservation Authority has, in recent years, become somewhat divorced from its grass roots constituency. It is clear, from advice solicited from and supplied by the Authority's members, advisory board members, staff, municipal councils and its public that more involvement in environment and watershed issues is both expected of the Conservation Authority and desired by these residents. Therefore, the themes of grass roots involvement, stewardship and environmental advocacy will play a greater role in future years. In this way we can all act locally to help preserve the integrity of our piece of the planet for future generations.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

The Hamilton Region Conservation Authority is a Provincial/Municipal partnership established in 1966 as a result of the expansion of the Spencer Creek Conservation Authority which was established in 1958. Our mandate is rooted in the Conservation Authorities Act which describes our objects as follows:

> *"To establish and undertake in the area over which it has jurisdiction, a program designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources other than gas, oil, coal and minerals."*

From this, the following mission statement was adapted:

> **"TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN THE PROTECTION, RESTORATION AND PUBLIC ENJOYMENT OF OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT TO ENSURE A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS."**

This mission statement will be realized through the fulfilment of the following objectives:

- **Involvement of watershed residents as active stewards of their local environment**
- **Protection of life and property from the hazards of flooding and erosion**
- **Conservation of environmentally sensitive and significant natural areas**
- **Enhancement of the quality and variety of life by providing green space and opportunities for recreation**
- **Contribution to environmental literacy**
- **Conservation of Authority owned heritage resources**

- **Negotiation of partnerships to undertake conservation and related projects with other agencies.**

- **Environmental advocacy**

3. FLOOD CONTROL

BACKGROUND

Water management and flood control has been the prime role of Ontario's Conservation Authorities since their inception. Thus, most projects and programs within the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority have a water management basis;

- the Valens and Christie reservoirs
- several channelization works
- wetland and floodplain acquisition
- reforestation
- floodplain, fill and construction regulations enforcement
- municipal plan review

Compared to other Ontario watersheds, flooding problems here are manageable and flood control initiatives taken to date have proved effective.

While several flood control projects have yet to be completed to protect the status quo, uncontrolled urban development will aggravate flooding problems and necessitate the construction of new protective measures.

EMPHASIS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

The past 25 years have been spent correcting, with flood control dams, reservoirs and stream channelization, the mistakes of the past 200 years of settlement. The next decades must concentrate on how a repeat of past mistakes can be avoided. Thus, the hallmark of the Authority's water management programs over the foreseeable future will be flood prevention. This approach recognizes the environmental importance of unobstructed watercourses and floodplains. It also happens to be far more cost effective.

1. Unobstructed floodplains allow the safe passage of flood water in severe weather conditions. Thus, programs and policies which will maintain floodplains in a natural unobstructed state will be pursued. To this end, more emphasis will be placed on the stringent enforcement of Authority administered fill/construction and floodplain regulations. Municipalities will also be encouraged to designate all floodplains as "no development" zones in their Official Plans and Zoning By-laws.

2. Floodplains and valley lands are incredibly important as the backbone to a system of urban green space and recreation corridors. Conservation Authority efforts to acquire and restore floodplains/valley lands to their natural state will be accelerated. Private stewardship in these areas will be encouraged, not unlike the stewardship programs now in effect on Wetland, Niagara Escarpment and Carolinian life zone properties.

3. Urbanization aggravates flooding unless storm water management projects are put into place. The Conservation Authority will initiate meetings with member municipalities to jointly develop comprehensive ecologically sound urban storm-water policies.

4. Small flood retardation structures to control urban storm water runoff are usually constructed and paid for by developers. Upon completion, title of these facilities is transferred to the municipality. To facilitate consistent maintenance and operating procedures, the Conservation Authority, depending on circumstances and if so requested by the municipality, may assume maintenance responsibility for these structures on a contract basis.

5. The planting of trees provides many benefits to the environment and is an effective and relatively easy way to help regulate our water resource. Thus, the Conservation Authority will undertake the planting of more trees in its watershed and, at the same time, will discourage the removal of existing tree cover. In this connection, the Conservation Authority will initiate meetings with member municipalities to encourage the adoption of both tree cutting bylaws and urban tree planting programs.

6. Wetlands are an invaluable resource with environmental benefits ranging from flood control and water filtration to the provision of habitat for flora and fauna. Conservation Authority efforts to acquire and/or reclaim wetlands will be accelerated and private stewardship will be encouraged.

7. Notwithstanding the above, there remain in the watershed a number of flooding problems, historic legacies, which can only be solved by means of structural solutions. Four such problems which must be addressed within the time frame of this plan are:

   - Stoney Creek and Battlefield Creek channelization
   - CN Embankment (Dundas)
   - Lower Spencer Creek (Dundas)
   - Ancaster Creek

8. The Authority's drainage basin approach lends itself to a comprehensive water management role beyond flood control. While the Conservation Authorities Act does not provide for direct Authority involvement in groundwater management and water quality, the Act does allow Conservation Authorities to negotiate contracts with other agencies in these fields. Therefore, discussions will be initiated with Provincial and municipal agencies to determine the feasibility of more extensive Conservation Authority involvement in ground water and water quality management.

9. Global warming, according to predictions, will impact on how we manage our water resource. The Conservation Authority will monitor research on global warming and adapt its programs, policies and practices to deal with any anticipated change.

4. EROSION CONTROL

BACKGROUND

In the natural world, the geologic erosion of soil and streambanks is a constant but very slow process. The rate of erosion has been greatly accelerated, however, by man's activities.

Soil erosion and the resulting deposition of these erosion materials as sediment threatens not only the long term productivity of our soils but also surface water quality and habitat.

While sediment generally originates from rural lands, our watershed is characterized by a high degree of urban development. Thus, much of the loss of topsoil, streambank erosion and the subsequent pollution of streams and surface water bodies can be attributed to urbanization.

Over the past 25 years, Conservation Authority involvement in the control of soil and streambank erosion has been limited to:

- private landowner assistance programs

  - reforestation
  - streambank erosion control
  - shoreline erosion control

- stream channelization projects
- providing comments and recommendations on erosion control methods to be utilized in the development of new subdivisions
- controlling, through fill regulations, the placement of fill on designated valley slopes
- practicing comprehensive soil erosion and streambank erosion control and prevention programs on its own properties

EMPHASIS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Erosion and resulting sedimentation is a function of moving water and thus is very obviously a river basin issue. Therefore, the Conservation Authority with its watershed organization can and must make a stronger contribution to the solution of this problem.

1. The Authority will identify erosion prone slopes not currently covered by fill regulations and seek Provincial approval to regulate development.

2. Erosion control programs in our watershed are delivered by various provincial and municipal agencies. To improve effectiveness and efficiency, the Conservation Authority is prepared to co-ordinate these erosion abatement efforts, thus providing a unified approach at the local level within specific watershed units. In this connection, the Authority will initiate meetings with other lead agencies to explore contractual arrangements.

    - identify the source areas of sediment
    - provide technical assistance for the control of sediment
    - prepare erosion control manuals
    - play a lead role in education and training
    - assist in enforcement

3. In order to involve more grass roots participation in soil erosion and sediment control and to foster a greater sense of stewardship for one's land, the Authority will provide

    - increased level of technical assistance and financial incentives under its various private landowners assistance programs.
    - a new technical service to assist landowners in the preparation of comprehensive conservation plans for private holdings.

4. Sedimentation is an insidious form of pollution. It is a major pollutant in such receiving water bodies as Cootes Paradise and Hamilton Harbour. The Hamilton Region Conservation Authority together with the Halton Region Conservation Authority is prepared to play a lead role in implementing an erosion control strategy for Cootes Paradise and Hamilton Harbour.

5. Other than subdivision agreements between developers and municipalities, there are no mechanisms in place to control the erosion of soil in urbanizing areas. The Conservation Authority will encourage municipalities to adopt topsoil removal by-laws designed to control erosion, runoff and sedimentation from areas under development.

5. NATURAL AREAS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Hamilton Region Conservation Authority has been very active in the acquisition of natural areas. To date, over 5,800 acres of wetlands, Niagara Escarpment lands and other natural areas have been acquired. In addition, portions of the 2,300 acres of conservation land acquired for flood control and recreation contain large tracts of natural areas.

In 1976, a study commissioned by the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority and its three neighbouring Conservation Authorities identified 44 environmentally sensitive areas (ESA's) covering some 31,250 acres or approximately 11% of the land area of the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth. Thirty seven of these ESA's are designated as such in the Region's Official Plan. Currently, some 40 additional natural areas within the Region are being studied for possible protection.

The preservation of these natural lands depends on both local municipal controls, private landowner attitudes and the willingness of public agencies to purchase designated and other environmentally important properties. Unfortunately, many of these areas are now lost because there is no public agency or funding available to make a purchase.

EMPHASIS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Over the long term, our success as a Conservation Authority will be measured by our accomplishments in natural area protection/acquisition. While the designation of environmentally sensitive areas in the Regional Official Plan and the acquisition of 8,100 acres by the Conservation Authority is a good start, more needs to be done to secure the future of our Region's natural heritage.

1. The continued acquisition of natural areas and corridors will be one of the Authority's prime objectives. Increased annual budget allocations will be made for this purpose.

More specifically, the Conservation Authority will attempt to acquire an average of 300 acres of natural lands per year. While this level of acquisition represents an increase of 71% over the annual acquisition average of 175 acres in the decade 1981 to 1990, it is only a return to the annual average acquisition level maintained by the Authority prior to 1981.

2. In addition to the accelerated acquisition program in major natural areas as described above, attention needs to be focused on smaller, yet locally important natural areas within the urban fabric. In this regard, the Authority will assist in the identification of these areas and will encourage municipalities to ensure their protection.

3. Municipalities can protect natural areas from urban development through the exercise of zoning controls. In this connection, municipalities rely heavily on the environmental input received from the Conservation Authority. The Authority will ensure that municipalities be given sound, well researched environmental advice to allow their Councils to make informed decisions.

4. The Conservation Authority will continue to assist the Province of Ontario in advancing its various land stewardship programs. The Conservation Authority is currently involved with the Carolinian Canada, Niagara Escarpment and wetland stewardship programs. In addition, the Authority will explore the feasibility of extending these programs to all natural areas, including floodplains, and ravine lands.

5. Plans will be developed for all Authority owned natural areas to ensure their long term ecological integrity and biological diversity.

6. The natural areas of this Region are a refuge for untold numbers of species of wildlife and plants which can no longer survive elsewhere in the face of urbanization. Therefore, the Conservation Authority will undertake fish and wildlife habitat improvement projects on its holdings. To further protect species in these refuge areas, the matter of permitting hunting on Authority properties will be reviewed, meetings will be held with all interested groups before a final decision on the hunting issue is made by the Authority. Any final decision of the Authority on the hunting issue should be subject to the recognition that there may be compelling reasons to reduce wildlife populations if over population threatens the biological diversity of the natural area.

7. The Conservation Authority, as part of its private landowner assistance programs, will encourage, through technical advice and financial assistance, the improvement of fish and wildlife habitat on private lands.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

BACKGROUND

The Authority has, since 1970, carried out formal education programs in conjunction with local Boards of Education. Some 24 different education programs are conducted at the Resource Management Centre and the Merrick Field Centre by Authority employed staff. Each year approximately 10% of all enrolled students in Hamilton-Wentworth attend programs at these centres. Over the course of its history, the education program has been visited by some 400,000 students.

In addition to the education programs offered to the school students, the Authority has offered education programs to the general public. These programs have taken different forms ranging from informal hikes to formal workshops.

In the beginning, the strategy of the conservation education program was to alert people to the degradation of their local environment and to promote the wise use of renewable natural resources within the watershed.

With the current high level of concern and interest in environmental issues, it is apparent that a portion of this original objective has been achieved. The involvement of our local public in recycling programs and composting projects is ample proof that the general public are willing to make a meaningful contribution to a better environment.

EMPHASIS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

With public awareness of the environment at a high level and with the Authority's stated objective to return to a more grass roots base, conservation education programs will shift its emphasis to encourage local co-operative environmental action at the home, school, municipal and industrial level. With this in mind, the following emphases will be pursued over the next decade:

1. 'Our natural environment' as our instructional theme will be continued for all students at an expanded Dundas Valley Field Centre. The centre will, through its programming, teach an appreciation of nature to the students and stress what individuals can do to improve our natural environment.

2. The ideals of river basin management will be taught from a yet to be built field centre at the Christie Conservation Area. Both the Dundas Valley and Christie Field Centres will replace the Resource Management Centre which until now has been the main location for renewable natural resources education. The emphasis of the Resource Management Centre will be shifted to rentals and conference needs.

3. The feasibility of a mobile nature centre to offer environmental programs will be pursued. This unit would be available to local schools, especially the ones that can't make use of the two field centres, and public groups, including municipal recreation departments, churches, service clubs, neighbourhood associations, etc. Programs and exhibits will emphasize the role of the individual as a responsible steward for our watershed resources.

4. Despite our belief in an expanded conservation education program, traditional subsidies for the conduct of such programs from the Ministry of Natural Resources are expected to decrease. Thus, if these programs are to succeed, new sources of funding must be found. In this regard it will be necessary to:

   - Recover all operating costs from user groups

   - Explore fund raising opportunities for new developments, including partnerships with the Boards of Education and/or the private sector in the development of the Christie Field Centre.

5. There is a need to develop a fully integrated regional environmental education program with the various school boards and others. The Authority will encourage this multi party co-operative approach and if need be, make staff resources available to facilitate joint exploratory meetings.

7. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

BACKGROUND

The Conservation Authority's Community Relations program was designed to improve public awareness of its programs and policies. Through this program, support was garnered for the grass roots basis of the organization. Due to an increase in recreational activities and the need to break even on the operation of conservation areas, Community Relations efforts were gradually directed to increasing the attendance of watershed residents at its conservation areas. This emphasis increased through the mid 1980's and remains a significant component of our current Community Relations program.

EMPHASIS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

While public support is important economically to the viability of the Authority's highly acclaimed conservation areas, marketing activities should always be secondary to environmental awareness efforts. With this in mind, Community Relations programs will be closely aligned with the Authority's environmental education programs and the following emphasis will be pursued over the next decade.

1. Where possible, the Authority will play a leadership role in establishing lines of communication with watershed residents so that they may play a more important stewardship role within our watershed. In this regard, the Authority will study the feasibility of establishing a storefront environmental information centre, perhaps in conjunction with other agencies.

2. The Authority will endeavour to establish regular columns in area print media and programming on local cable, television and radio stations.

3. As part of the Authority's outreach program, watershed residents will be encouraged to visit conservation areas, thus increasing their appreciation of our natural environment. This will involve innovative marketing approaches and special events on Conservation Authority holdings.

4. Within the Hamilton-Wentworth Region there are some 30 environmental interest groups which were established in response to public concern about the environmental state of the Region's watershed. There is little formal contact between these groups as yet. A stronger, more cohesive environmental movement within the watershed will result if any information sharing mechanism is established between the groups. The Conservation Authority will encourage regular joint meetings and, if deemed appropriate, supply support staff and financial resources to ensure the success of effective interaction between these groups.

5. Conservation Authority monthly board meetings are open to the public. To increase public awareness, the Conservation Authority will publicize upcoming meetings and encourage the public and media to attend.

8. 0UTDOOR RECREATION/TOURISM

BACKGROUND

It has long been recognized that parks and open spaces and their associated amenities are essential requirements for a healthy community. The Conservation Authority has been a major provider of parks, natural open spaces and recreational opportunity within this Region. Its land holdings total some 8,100 acres which provide recreational opportunity for about 1 million visitors per year.

Approximately 2,300 acres comprising the Valens, Christie, Confederation Park, Westfield Heritage and Fifty Point Conservation Areas as well as Confederation Park, have intensive development components. The remaining 5,800 acres are relatively undeveloped natural lands.

Over the past 25 years the Conservation Authority has accomplished its land acquisitions in these basic categories:

- Lands associated with water management reservoir sites.
- Natural areas, i.e. the Niagara Escarpment, valley lands, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Lands along the Lake Ontario shoreline

In terms of development, intensive recreational developments have taken place in the major water management sites - Valens and Christie - and within those sites on the Lake Ontario shoreline - Confederation Park and Fifty Point Conservation Area.

EMPHASIS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

There can be no doubt, based on user data, of the public acceptance of the Authority's open space and recreation network as developed to date. Thus, the expansion of open space and recreation facilities will have a high priority. However, the development of conservation areas will be tempered in light of social and demographic trends as to how people use and value these lands.

1. With respect to new acquisitions, an emphasis will be placed on the purchase of corridors linking existing public open space and recreation areas with the Niagara Escarpment, the Spencer Creek and other drainage areas, and the Lake Ontario shoreline. This will create opportunities to manage a park system within a larger ecosystem context. The acquisition of abandoned utility and transportation rights-of-way will form part of this new emphasis.

2. As indicated in Chapter 4 - Natural Areas - there is a need to protect natural areas within the watershed. This requirement will be reflected in how Conservation Areas are developed. More specifically:

    - Less intensive developments are proposed for the south side of the Christie Reservoir, focusing on cross country ski and hiking opportunities. These may include a trail related development and interpretive facility.

    - The development of the Governor's Road, Iroquoia Heights, Borer's Creek Conservation Areas and Spencer Gorge Wilderness Area will reflect the trail oriented developments of the Dundas Valley Conservation Area.

    - "Low key" trail oriented developments will be pursued for the Westfield Heritage Conservation Area with the exception of the more intensive development proposed at the 25 acre Westfield Heritage Centre site.

    - Development concepts for the Fletcher Creek Conservation Area will emphasize the protection of environmentally sensitive areas, nature interpretation and environmental education.

3. The strategic location of Confederation Park and the Fifty Point Conservation Area on Lake Ontario and the success of developments in these areas to date, justify the introduction of additional facilities subject to their compatibility with developments now in place. Accordingly, high priority will be given to the establishment of a campground and the expansion of the marina at Fifty Point, and an expansion of Wild Waterworks at Confederation Park. Developments in these parks may include commercial endeavours in co-operation with the private sector if:

    - controls to safeguard the quality of the development are in place
    - service to the public is guaranteed
    - the Conservation Authority receives a reasonable share of generated revenues

4. The Conservation Authority will co-operate with the City of Hamilton in the development of $\pm$ 100 acres of parkland on the Hamilton Beach in accordance with the Moore/George Associates Inc. study undertaken in 1987. This will include the development of a public waterfront corridor along the lake side of the Hamilton Beach area between Confederation Park and the Burlington ship canal.

5. The Conservation Authority, at the request of the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth, has undertaken the management of Confederation Park and the Westfield Heritage Conservation Area. Further involvement in similar regionally significant recreation endeavours will be considered with total cost recovery at the request of the Region and/or area municipalities.

6. The development of a new Central Workshop at the Christie Conservation Area will receive a high priority. This will allow the Authority to properly address the increased operation and maintenance requirements of an expanded program involving the acquisition of substantial natural lands as well as the protection of the Dundas Valley associated with increased heavy traffic associated with the current workshop

9. HERITAGE RESOURCES

BACKGROUND

Since its inception, the Conservation Authority has acknowledged a stewardship responsibility for lands and facilities under its ownership, including structures and sites of historical value. Thus, the Authority has funded many historic projects on its lands including the Darnley Mill, the Hermitage and Hermitage Gatehouse Museum, the Valens Log Cabin, Ingledale, and most recently, the Griffin House in the Dundas Valley. In addition, the Conservation Authority has undertaken certain responsibilities within special partnership agreements, i.e. the management and operation of the Westfield Heritage Centre and the Fieldcote Memorial Park and Museum.

EMPHASIS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Heritage conservation is not a statutory Authority responsibility in the context of watershed management as defined in the Conservation Authorities Act. Rather, preservation of heritage structures and their interpretation is more closely aligned with municipal and provincial statutory responsibilities. Nonetheless, the Authority must continue to be a significant player by virtue of its ownership of historic sites, but there should be a shift in the nature of that involvement when the opportunity presents itself.

1. When structures on Authority property lend themselves to the interpretation of local history, the responsibility for their operation and day to day maintenance should ideally be assumed by the appropriate municipality. Discussions for joint management will take place with:

    - the Town of Flamborough with regard to the feasibility of a Flamborough oriented museum within the Westfield Heritage Centre complex

    - the Town of Ancaster with regard to the long term management options for the proposed Museum of Black History in the Griffin House.

The management approach adopted for the Fieldcote Museum in Ancaster can serve as a management model for the above situations.

2. The Conservation Authority will involve itself directly with the interpretation of sites which reflect the role of water within the watershed's development. As an example, the Authority will pursue interpretive plans of water dependent milling industries at the Crooks Hollow Conservation Area.

3. The Conservation Authority has assumed a management role in the further development and operation of the Westfield Heritage Conservation Area. This project will be expanded as a year round passive Conservation Area with several heritage events to take place on the "Village" site.

10. THE AUTHORITY AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE

BACKGROUND

Webster defines an advocate as "one who speaks or writes in support of". Conservation Authorities, since their inception, have been advocates of sound watershed management. In the sixties and early seventies, the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority was in the forefront as the local agency best suited to "speak for the environment".

Since the mid 1970's, this particular role of the Conservation Authority has declined.

It is abundantly clear from the feedback received in the preparation of this strategy that the public overwhelmingly expects the Conservation Authority to speak out on environmental issues. Thus, despite the fact that the membership may find it difficult to oppose, for environmental reasons, a project which the municipality they represent is supporting, the public expects the Authority to be heard and to again "speak for the environment".

As more and more environmental issues face our decision makers, there is clearly a need to define when the Authority should take a stand, how that stand should be presented, who should present the stand and in what detail.

EMPHASIS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

1. Advocacy involves at least two major responsibilities. Traditionally, the role of environmental advocate has been a reactive role. This reactive role has, rightly or wrongly, earned for environmentalists a rather negative label. This tendency must be balanced. Thus, the Conservation Authority will attempt to take a more proactive-leadership role when it speaks in support of the environment.

   Accordingly, the Conservation Authority will continue to speak out when:

- Important environmental issues are at stake
- A proposed project is a threat to achieving short or long term Conservation Authority goals as defined in our Mission Statement
- Developments or activities may have a direct effect on the integrity of Conservation Authority holdings and their use by the public.

2. First and foremost, the Authority, as a corporate board, its members and staff will attempt to lead by example. In this connection, a limited environmental code of ethics has already been prepared and adopted. This code of ethics will be continually upgraded to incorporate the latest environmental thinking and we will encourage others to join with us in adopting a similar code. In addition, the Authority will:

   - Join with others to support environmental causes and help to develop alternate solutions to environmental problems rather than simply criticizing proposed developments.

   - Seek representation on boards and committees where our points of view can be expressed and where co-operative endeavours can be explored.

   - In our comments to municipalities and our watershed residents, our views will be comprehensive and involve all environmental concerns rather than simply those we are mandated to speak on. This will help our community leaders to make decisions based on sound environmental advice.

   - Prepare an environmental impact statement for each construction project carried out by the Authority.

ROLE OF THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman of the Conservation Authority, as the duly elected head of this corporate body, is the obvious person to act as the spokesman for the Authority. Thus, the Chairman and, in his place the General Manager or their designate, will be the person who, on behalf of the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority, "speaks for the environment".

The Chairman or General Manager or their designate should be able to speak as the official spokesman of the Authority whenever they are requested to do so as long as the comments made are in line with accepted policies, historical position, current philosophy, etc. Obviously, where no policy has been developed by the Authority, only a general comment can be made pending such policy.

11. CORPORATE STRUCTURE

BACKGROUND

The Full Authority, the governing body of the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority, is made up of 21 members; 18 appointed by the member municipalities and 3 by the Province of Ontario. The full membership meets monthly to act on recommendations made by 4 advisory boards, subcommittees and staff.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority as well as the Chairman of each Advisory board is elected annually by the Full Authority membership.

Full Authority members typically serve on one of the 4 advisory boards, i.e.

- Community Relations
- Conservation Areas
- Historic Sites
- Water Management

The membership of the advisory boards is complemented by 27 citizen members selected for their expertise in particular specialties. Also reporting directly to the Authority is the Budget and Administration Subcommittee composed entirely of Authority members.

There is an essential flexibility within this system in that the advisory boards are creatures of the Conservation Authority. With a contemplated change in emphasis, the terms of reference for advisory boards can be altered, or boards can be added or deleted to serve the program emphasis.

The permanent staff complement of the Conservation Authority is 55 persons. This professional staff works in 4 divisions, i.e.

- Finance and Administration
- Operations and Development
- Planning and Engineering
- Program Services.

Again, since these divisions are creatures of the Authority, they are somewhat flexible in that different emphases can be taken within a division without necessarily having to create new divisions to fit new program initiatives.

EMPHASIS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Advisory Boards

1. The Conservation Strategy outlines several program issues and initiatives that at present do not receive the required attention, i.e.

   - Habitat enhancement
   - Fish and wildlife matters
   - Environmental advocacy
   - Liaison with other environmental groups
   - Volunteer involvement
   - Stewardship programs
   - Conservation outreach programs
   - Private landowner assistance programs

   These issues will be added to the various terms of reference for our existing Advisory Board structure. Specific care must be taken to ensure that environmental issues focused on stewardship programs, volunteer involvement, environmental ethics, environmental group liaison and environmental advocacy are properly addressed within the responsibilities of each Advisory Board as appropriate.

2. The strength of the Authority's advisory board system has been the inclusion of citizen members selected for their expertise in given fields. To date, no term of membership has been established on the advisory boards. To facilitate the addition of new citizen members and hence, new ideas and talents, a maximum membership term of 6 years will be instituted. Recognizing that there is a value in continuity of membership, this implementation will be staged over 6 years.

Staff Implications

The strategy directions detailed in this report will required more staff resources in the following areas:

- Ecologist/naturalist
- Land acquisition
- Volunteer co-ordination
- Stepped up regulation enforcement
- Stewardship programs
- Outreach and education programs
- Landowner assistance programs
- Recreation planning and programming

However, in these times of fiscal constraint, it will be difficult to expand our permanent staff complement. The challenge therefore is to do the job with current staff resources wherever possible and only then consider the hiring of additional employees. To this end, the Authority will adopt the following principles.

1. As part of an ongoing process, the effectiveness and delivery efficiency of all Authority activities will be critically evaluated in light of our evolving mandate. This evaluation process will be undertaken on a division by division basis. The governing guideline in this process will be "what is important - not what has been traditional". As a result, current activities may be eliminated or changed thus allowing related staff resources to be shifted to new endeavours. It is expected that this staff reorientation will allow current staff to play an expanded role in:

- Volunteer co-ordination
- Stepped up regulation enforcement
- Stewardship programs
- Landowner assistance programs
- Recreation planning and programming

2. In the area of land acquisitions, it will be necessary to increase the role of outside negotiators. This practice was followed until the late 80's when outside appraisal firms also carried out negotiations with affected landowners.

3. Additional staff may be required in the proposed expanded outreach and education programs. Some of this work is seasonal in nature and may be undertaken by seasonal casual staff and/or volunteers. Additional staff in the Authority's environmental education program will only be hired if associated costs are recovered by user fees.

4. While staff reorientation will be considered first, there may be overriding justifications to hire additional staff to undertake specific work responsibilities. With this in mind and, in view of the heavy requirements contained in the Conservation Strategy for Environmental Advocacy, natural areas protection and an increased role in an advisory capacity to local municipalities, a permanent position of an ecologist/naturalist will be considered.

5. Although not directly related to new initiatives indicated by this Conservation Strategy, the Authority will need more in house specialized expertise in personnel and benefit matters. Currently, the General Manager is responsible for personnel matters related to permanent staff while the Assistant General Manager looks after personnel needs for casual employees. Matters of personnel and benefits will remain primarily 'in house' and professional expertise will be obtained on an as required basis.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

BACKGROUND

Traditionally, Conservation Authority Administration and Conservation Land Management programs and projects are supported with a 50% subsidy and Water and Related Land Management programs and projects by a 55% subsidy from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). This contribution has declined dramatically over the past 15 years. In 1990, MNR transfer payments represented only 16.4% ($1,136,595) of our total regular budget expenditure of $6,915,702.

In addition to our regular budget in 1990, the Authority expended an additional $2,422,201 at Confederation Park and Westfield. These expenditures were supported in partly by gate and other revenues including a Regional levy of $1,020,100.

When these budgets are combined, total revenue sources to offset all expenditures were:

Municipal Levy	34.5%
User Fee & Operating Revenues	28.3%
Other Sources	26.2%
Regular Provincial Funding	11.1%

The 1990 Regular Budget levy represented a payment of $5.80 for each of the 379,091 watershed residents.'

The 1990 levy for Confederation Park and Westfield represented a payment of $2.38 for each of the 429,466 residents of the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth

EMPHASIS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Although part of the costs associated with the proposed new Strategy initiatives can be accommodated within the limits of current budget trends, other funding sources will be required.

1. Special Subsidy Programs

- Special Provincial subsidies are available for Niagara Escarpment, Carolinian Canada and Wetland acquisitions. These subsidies will assist the Authority in its proposed accelerated land acquisition program of natural areas and open space corridors.

- Subsidies from other Provincial Ministries will be applied for to finance Authority sponsored heritage projects, waterfront projects, major recreational developments and harbour related sediment control programs. Federal subsidies will be applied for to assist in the proposed expansion of the Fifty Point marina.

2. Special Fund Raising Initiatives

- The proposed accelerated land acquisition program needs to be supported by new funding sources, notably donations. Fund raising drives by the Conservation Foundation of the Hamilton Region will reflect this increased reliance on corporate and private contributions.

- Proposed restoration projects at the Westfield Heritage Centre will require special fund raising efforts. The Conservation Foundation of the Hamilton Region and "the Friends of the Westfield Centre" have agreed to assist.

- Special funds will be needed to construct the proposed Christie Interpretive Centre. Consideration will be given to partnerships with major user groups.
- The development of the 30 km hiking corridor between West Hamilton and Jerseyville (CP right-of-way) will be carried out as a community project. Municipalities, service clubs, church organizations, schools, corporations, special interest groups and the public at large will be involved.

3. User Fees

- The Authority's "user pay" philosophy will be continued with the objective of breaking even or realizing a net revenue on the operation of all recreational endeavours combined which reflect the investment made in the facility.

- User fees will be charged to support most of the operational costs associated with the Authority's conservation education program

- Currently, user fees are charged to cover costs of specific information requests. Charges for other services will be considered.

4. Volunteer Activities

- Several Conservation Authority projects would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of volunteers. The Fieldcote Museum and the Westfield Heritage Centre are just two examples. The Conservation Authority will encourage volunteer involvement in other suitable endeavours.

5. Partnerships

- Several new initiatives can only succeed with joint financing arrangements through partnerships. In this connection, partnership arrangements will be explored with:

  - MOE re an extended water management role
  - Remedial Action Plan (RAP) committee for financial assistance towards those items related to the Harbour rehabilitation process.
  - Municipalities re erosion and sediment control
  - Region and environmental interest groups re storefront environmental information centre
  - Other Provincial ministries re expanded landowner assistance programs

6. Reserve Accounts

- Wherever practical, reserve accounts will be set up to protect the Authority against unexpected extraordinary expenses. Four such accounts are already in existence, i.e.

  - Non routine major maintenance reserve for recreational facilities
  - Non routine major maintenance reserve for heritage restoration projects
  - Accumulated sick credit reserve
  - Wetland acquisition reserve

Additional funds could be set aside from management fees generated from the operation of Confederation Park and Westfield Heritage Conservation Area. To date, these have been expended on a year to year basis, either as a grant back to the area involved or within our regular budget. With the final payment of the wave pool loan in 1992, there is potential to retain a greater portion of the management fee earned.